



Barley Country

Alberta's Barley Information Source

SEPTEMBER 2011

Established 1991

MARKETING

Charting the future of the Canadian Wheat Board

BY CAROLYN KING

For more than 70 years, wheat and barley grown on the Prairies for export or for human consumption in the domestic market has been marketed through the CWB's single desk.

After winning a majority in the May election, the Conservative Party of Canada is preparing to introduce legislation this fall for a dual marketing system, ultimately giving producers the choice to sell their grain on the open market or through the Canadian Wheat Board. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Minister Gerry Ritz has repeatedly said he expects to have this legislation in effect by Aug. 1, 2012.

"Simply put, our government has always believed that every farmer deserves the right to determine who, when and to whom they sell their grain," said Ritz in an interview with *Barley Country* in July. "Grain farmers in Western Canada will soon be given the freedom and opportunity to sell their own grain. We know barley farmers will capitalize on this opportunity."

Describing Canadian barley farmers as "intelligent, hardworking businesspeople," Ritz says they should have the same opportunities farmers enjoy in the rest of the country and around the world.

"Like most Western Canadian farmers, we see the Board as an impediment to future growth. We've seen a burgeoning expansion in canola and pulse and even oats, which used to be under the [CWB], but we don't see that happening in wheat, durum and barley," he says. "The end of the single desk will create opportunities, encourage investment and drive competition that farmers have been asking for to the Western Canadian grain market, bringing with it a value-added industry and jobs. It's a win-win for farmers and Canada as a whole."

Matt Sawyer, chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission, notes: "We're looking forward to the opportunity for farmers to be able to



Dr. Kelly Turkington, above, was among the many research scientists from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Lacombe Research Centre and the Alberta Field Crop Development Centre who presented their latest findings at the 2011 Field Day in July. Turkington, who has a number of barley disease and disease resistance

studies underway, told participants resistance is ultimately the key strategy to use in barley production. "It doesn't add a lot of input cost if any, and you don't have to be worried about whether you have to spray," he says. For more coverage on Field Day, see page 6.

Photo: Lori Loree

market their barley outside of the Wheat Board as well as to have a strong and viable Wheat Board for those who wish to continue to do business with it. Farmers should have the option to do with their product whatever they see as best."



Allen Oberg

organization can last under a dual marketing system.

"Whatever entity that is set up, it would just be a transition

into a fully open market," Oberg says. "The changes being contemplated are really the wind-down of the current organization with a single-desk structure, and the creation of

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MESSAGE

Change and opportunity

BY MATT SAWYER

“My hope is that a more open marketplace will promote better prices, new markets and certainly more collaboration between farmers, buyers, maltsters, shippers and end-use customers”

The Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) has long been a subject of debate for Western barley growers.

Resolution appears to be coming this fall when the minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Gerry Ritz, plans to introduce changes to CWB legislation to allow for marketing choice. An interview with Minister Ritz on page 9 discusses why he believes this is good for Canadian agriculture.

As I write this, the exact shape of those changes is unknown. Regardless of how it plays out, the Alberta Barley Commission’s Board of Directors is committed to responding to the changing marketplace—and supporting the federal government as it moves through this transition.

For a number of years, the Alberta Barley Commission has had a neutral stance on market choice, knowing our members are divided on the issue. Our goal has been to work with industry partners, including the

CWB, on research projects and other initiatives with long-term benefits to barley growers. We would, however, fail to serve our membership if we were not prepared for this change.

My hope is that a more open marketplace will promote better prices, new markets and certainly more collaboration between farmers, buyers, maltsters, shippers and end-use customers.

Your Board will continue to prepare for change while also working to ease any transitions that come our way.

Meanwhile, there have been a number of recent changes to the staff at the Commission, including the departure of Mike Leslie and the addition of new employees and contractors to fill previous vacancies. (see article on page 18). During this transition, the executive committee is working closely with staff to ensure the Commission’s projects and priorities continue to be met. Despite these changes, it’s business as usual at the Alberta Barley Commission.

Reporting to our members is a major part of the Commission’s busi-



Matt Sawyer

ness. *Barley Country* provides one venue for this communication, but regional meetings and the annual general meeting are an opportunity for our members to really impact the future of the Commission. We

strongly encourage you

to attend your regional meeting (see News and events on page 24), as well as our annual general meeting on Dec. 8.

This fall is the perfect time to get involved in grassroots democracy—there are a number of director and delegate positions up for election across the province. Please contact your regional director to learn more about the opportunities in your area.

I’d like to thank our Board, staff and contractors for their dedication and support during this transition, which also offers tremendous potential to our organization.

Matt Sawyer is the chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission.

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Alberta is Barley Country.

Alberta grows more barley than any other province, and its output typically accounts for half of Canada’s annual crop. Barley production for feed, malt and food is an important economic activity in the province.

See past issues of *Barley Country* at www.albertabarley.com

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Charting the future

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something entirely new, which would have to operate in an open market environment.”

In contrast, groups like the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) and the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGGA) believe the CWB can compete in a dual market.



Brian Otto

“The challenge for the Wheat Board is to develop a business plan that shows value to producers. I firmly believe the Board can do that. And if they are showing value to producers, they

will get the producers’ business,” says Brian Otto, the president of the WBGGA and a former vice-chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission.

“After all, the Wheat Board has been selling grain for well over 70 years in the international markets. That’s their ace in the hole—they have the market contacts, whereas the grain companies have to develop that part of their business.”

Another area of contention is whether farmers truly support marketing choice. This summer, the CWB held a nonbinding plebiscite asking farmers to choose between the single desk or a completely open system. Barley producers were asked to select from the following options:

- A) I wish to maintain the ability to market all barley, both malting/food, with the continuing exception of feed barley sold domestically, through the CWB single-desk system.
- B) I wish to remove the single-desk marketing system from the CWB and sell all barley through an open-market system.

Balloting closed Aug. 24 and results will be announced Sept. 9; for details, visit cwb.ca at that time.

“A plebiscite is the clearest expression of what farmers are thinking,” explains Oberg. “We would certainly have liked the minister to have followed the Canadian Wheat Board Act and conducted a legal, binding plebiscite. But since he’s given no indication that he plans to do so, our own plebiscite is the next best thing.”

Oberg says the CWB Board of Directors will abide by and support the plebiscite no matter what the results.

Richard Phillips, the GGC’s executive director, doesn’t think the plebiscite will make a difference any more than if pro-gun control people tried to have a vote on keeping their Bill.

“The federal government was elected with a clear majority. They have promised for at least five elections that, if they had a majority, they would bring marketing choice to Western Canadian farmers,” Phillips says. “They have been elected to govern and they are going



Views strongly differ on the potential effects of marketing choice on Prairie producers. Nonetheless, the federal government has repeatedly said it is committed to offering marketing choice to Western Canadian grain producers. Photo: Canadian Wheat Board

to implement their campaign promises. End of story. Any plebiscites or such delaying tactics at this point are wasting time and energy that should be focussed on a new business model.”

Effects on wheat and barley growers

Views strongly differ on the potential effects of marketing choice on Prairie producers.

Phillips believes choice will benefit producers.

“Today’s successful farmers are marketing their own canola, peas, lentils, canary seed, flax and oats,” says Phillips. “They are very capable of marketing their wheat and barley as well.”

Barley grower Gerald Pilger, who farms near Ohaton in Camrose Country and has run for election to the CWB, disagrees.

“In the short term, there will be winners and losers,” he explains. “Some people who are close to markets will, without doubt, make more money. But in a macro sense, looking at what’s going to happen to agriculture in Western Canada, there are going to be more losers than winners.”

Pilger says farmers further away from processing plants or shipping—or without access to markets—will not earn as much as they do now.

The loss of the CWB monopoly, he adds, will lead to the end of the CWB and leave a serious gap for producers.

“The Canadian Wheat Board is an agent that works on behalf of farmers. They find markets for grown-in-Canada grain and they get the best price they can for that grain. Once we lose the Wheat Board, who is going to fill that need of finding markets for Canadian grain? The multinationals don’t care if they buy Canadian grain or Australian grain or Argentine grain or FSU grain. They are going to buy as cheap as they can and sell for the

maximum they can,” says Pilger.

“If we lose the Canadian Wheat Board, who is going to come up with the \$70 million-plus worth of marketing we are currently investing through the CWB to find markets for Canadian grains? The government? I doubt it. Farmers through a check-off? Okay, but they don’t want to pay it through the Canadian Wheat Board, so why are they going to pay it through a check-off?”

Conversely, Otto believes marketing choice will address some serious existing problems, such as firmer price signals to growers, fewer delays in receiving full payment, more control over delivery dates and more market-oriented pricing.

As well, both Otto and Phillips believe marketing choice will help expand the domestic malting industry, creating more opportunities for growers.

“Marketing choice will allow malt companies to offer contracts with the price attached, get their acres locked down and attract the quality of barley they’re looking for,” says Otto. “It will lead to malt contracts with certain specifications and they’ll be able to offer a price for barley at that spec.”

Below-spec malting barley could have discounts, Otto says, just as the contract for well-below-spec barley could be cancelled or superior quality barley could receive a premium.

“By creating an open, competitive market system, we create a positive environment to attract investment,” he says. “One only has to look at canola, which has been in an open, competitive market system its whole life, and see the investment going into crushing plants in Western Canada.”

Along with increased grain processing, Otto sees growth opportunities in areas such as the brokerage industry.

“**The challenge for the Wheat Board is to develop a business plan that shows value to producers. If they are showing value to producers, they will get the producers’ business**”

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MARKETS

All signs point to strong barley prices



“Malting barley: It is the first time in 30 years producers are seeing high prices, tremendous demand and the pipeline empty at the same time”

BY LEE HART

Observers of world barley markets say prices don't appear to have a downside for Alberta producers over the next six months to a year.

Supplies are tight for both feed and malting barley, demand is strong and increasing, as are indicators for feed barley to stay in the \$184 to \$230/tonne (\$4 to \$5/bushel) range and malt barley in the \$275 to \$298 (\$6 to \$6.50/bushel) range.

While absolutes seldom exist when it comes to price forecasting, analysts say market signals point toward low stocks and steady demand, boding well for strong prices for producers.

Malt barley

All indicators point to a strong malting barley market over the coming months, says long-time malt barley marketing specialist Rod Green of Central Ag Marketing in Airdrie.

“There is no doubt it is a strong malt barley market,” Green says. “It is the first time in my 30 years in the business when I have seen a situation where there have been high prices, tremendous demand and the pipeline is empty at the same time. Usually there is one or the other, but right now we have high prices and there is no, or very little, old-crop malt barley.”

Green says that, along with increasing worldwide demand by brewers, the three major malt producing regions of the world—Canada, Europe and Australia—all had poor crops in 2009/2010.

The 2010/2011 Canadian crop is a little larger, but was seeded late; in Europe, farmers were hit by hot, dry conditions earlier this year, and the Australian crop just went into the ground in June. “So there is a lot of weather to happen yet before we know what kind of crop (yields) we will have this year,” Green says.

Green and other barley specialists see more marketing opportunities for Western Canadian malt barley producers should the federal government remove the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) monopoly on wheat and malt barley for the 2012/2013 crop year.

“Many farmers now already have relationships with maltsters, so in an open market it just means they will be able to deal directly with buyers,” Green says. “And we will likely see producers developing relationships with more maltsters in other countries, too.”

“We will probably see more barley production because some producers focused more on growing non-Board crops. But even with increased production, as the world comes out of the recession, there will be more demand for malt barley.”

Feed barley

Charlie Pearson, the longtime market analyst with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development in Edmonton, says one of the key factors affecting Canadian feed barley is the price of U.S. corn.

“The ethanol policy in the U.S. is still in place and even with a good corn crop, that still creates a strong demand for corn,” he says. “Corn fluctuated between \$6 and \$7 a bushel through the summer and, with good demand, we'll see prices stay high for the coming year.”



Charlie Pearson

High corn prices make Alberta feed barley a more economical option for Canadian beef producers, although feed barley supplies already “are extremely tight.” With historically low acres of barley in the ground for 2010/2011, the amount of new feed barley may be limited.

In the June 2011 Grains and Oilseeds Outlook, Statistics Canada forecast 2.8 million hectares (6.9 million acres) of seeded barley in Canada in 2010/2011, compared to 3.5 million hectares (8.6 million acres) in 2009/2010. Pearson estimates about 400,000 hectares (one million acres) of 2010/2011's crop may go to silage and green feed, leaving the balance of the acres to produce “a relatively small” estimated six million tonnes of feed barley and two million tonnes of malting barley. StatsCan estimates a total crop of 7.6 million tonnes for 2010/2011.

Errol Anderson with ProMarket Communications in Calgary also expects feed barley markets to remain “fairly strong” over the next six to nine months.

“We may see some price pressure from off-combine bids this fall,” he says. “So that may lower prices for a while, but I see it recovering after that.”

Anderson says with about 36 per cent of the U.S. corn crop earmarked for ethanol production, supplies will remain tight. If the U.S. cuts ethanol subsidies, however, more corn could be put into the feed market.

“Another point to watch—if the crude oil price stays stable at about \$90 barrel, or if it drops to \$80-something—that could slow down demand for U.S. ethanol production and could free up some corn, which would then affect the barley price.”

Also see “Barley supply and disposition” on page 18.

Lee Hart is a longtime agricultural writer based in Calgary.

PRODUCTION

After a soggy spring, barley quality now up to the weather

BY LEE HART

Given that many barley producers faced a delay in seeding this spring, a later barley harvest is predicted this fall in Alberta.

Both yield and quality aspects of barley can be compromised by later seeding dates, say researchers who have compared performance of crops seeded early (late April to mid-May) to those seeded late (late May to early June).

But, while later-seeded crops may start with a potential disadvantage, it is weather conditions at harvest time that largely determine the quality and quantity of barley that will go in the bin this fall.

"If you can tell me what the weather is going to do between now and harvest, I can give you a pretty good guess on what the quality will be like," says Harry Brook, a crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development in Stettler.

"In 2009 we had a cooler summer, but that was followed by a phenomenal September with excellent conditions for the crop to mature and ripen. Then in 2010 we had a cool, wet summer, and a pretty nice October, but that was after a killing frost in September had pretty well locked in poor quality."

An encouraging sign

Brook says while seeding was delayed over much of Alberta this year, one encouraging sign is that the 2011 growing degree days (as of early July) are higher than last year. If weather remained decent through to September, crops would have had a greater chance to mature.

Growing degree days reflect the amount of heat generated in a 24-hour period and can be found on the Ropin' the Web website at agric.gov.ab.ca (search for "growing degree").

Brook says overall, the 2010 growing degree days in most of Alberta were about 15 per cent below the long-term average. This year, in the Camrose area, for example, growing degree days between May 1 and early July were at about 500 and just slightly below the long-term average of 525 growing degree days for the same period. At this time in 2010, the growing degree days for the Camrose area were about 400.

Dr. John O'Donovan, a researcher with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Lacombe Research Station, says, "while there is quite a bit of variability, generally speaking" later seeding (mid- to late May to early-June) can affect barley crops a number of ways. This potentially includes reduced crop yield, higher protein, lower plumpness and a



Photo: Michael Interisano

higher risk of crop lodging, especially at higher seeding rates.

The degree of yield and quality loss varies, but some studies in Manitoba have shown a five per cent yield loss for barley seeded in late May compared to that seeded in early May. Regarding malting barley quality, 50 per cent of samples earned malt barley acceptance on crops seeded the first half of May. The rate dropped to 34 per cent for crops seeded the third week of May and to 16 per cent for crops seeded the last week of May.

O'Donovan notes, however, while studies show early seeded crops had higher yields in southern Alberta, in the Peace Country later seeding sometimes led to increased yields.

While the weather is always a wild card in determining crop yield and quality, here are a few harvest guidelines:

1. Silage barley should be cut when the barley heads are well filled and the grain is in the late soft-dough stage—about 55 to 65 per cent moisture. Crops cut at 65 per cent or higher moisture should be allowed to field-wilt before being chopped and packed.
2. Barley cut for green feed should be at the late soft-dough stage. More mature plants will yield slightly higher, but may be less palatable to livestock.
3. Under straight combining conditions, feed barley should be harvested as soon as the grain contains less than 14.5 per cent moisture. Malt barley should be harvested when the grain contains less than 13.5 per cent moisture. Shattering loss is higher if the crop is allowed to become "dead ripe" at harvest.

4. Feed barley can usually be swathed five to 10 days before it would have been straight combined. It should be swathed at a height of 15 to 20 centimetres (six to eight inches) so it lays in a windrow that is high enough to dry readily after a rain.
5. Since quality characteristics such as mature, plump, uniform seeds that are not discoloured are key factors in determining malt barley acceptance, particular attention needs to be paid to:
 - a. Swathing or straight combining the crop at the correct stage of maturity and moisture content
 - b. Threshing correctly to avoid broken or skinned kernels
 - c. Careful handling
6. Malt barley can be swathed without yield or quality loss as soon as the crop has turned from green to light brown or buff colour and kernels contain from 30 to 35 per cent moisture.

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“**While seeding was delayed over much of Alberta this year, one encouraging sign is that the 2011 growing degree days (as of early July) are higher than last year”**

RESEARCH

Annual Field Day features breeding and agronomy project updates

- 1 More than 100 people rode the buses during the 2011 Field Day in July. The annual event connects Alberta's ag community to its scientific researchers.
- 2 Field Day participants examine barley heads in test plots for continuous barley silage at the Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre.
- 3 Examining various samples of net blotch (sealed in petri dishes) helped give insight and context to both the disease and research studies underway to make barley more resistant to it.
- 4 Sundre barley isn't the only barley variety seed grower Bob Mastin produces, but judging by his truck, it's one of his favourite lines.
- 5 Dr. Pat Juskiw, a plant breeder with the Alberta Field Crop Development Centre, spoke about a new two-row malting variety (TR10694) currently in its second year of co-op trials.
- 6 Field Day also included an opportunity for participants to examine test plots for a number of projects, including intercrops (growing barley, oats and spring triticale together) as a strategy and tool for improved silage production.



BY ANNE-MARIE
BRUZGA LUCHAK

Despite flooding earlier in the month, the 2011 Lacombe Field Day on July 28 proved a great success with a sunny day and a turnout of more than 100 people.

Sponsored in part by the Alberta Barley Commission, the field day gives producers the chance to tap into the cutting-edge research being funded by their check-off dollars. It also serves as a networking opportunity between members of Alberta's agriculture industry and the Lacombe research community.

Breeding: Muskwa comes online

While new varieties regularly come to the forefront, Dr. Pat Juskiw, a plant breeder with the Alberta Field Crop Development Centre (FCDC), is particularly excited about a new two-row malting variety (TR10694) currently in its second year of co-op trials.

"While it is a malting line, it just happened to be the highest yielding in the 2010 co-op trial—it even out-yielded Xena, the two-row feed check," Juskiw says. "So we'll see what happens this year. It showed great potential, but one year of data does not make a variety."

Dr. Joseph Nyachiro, also with the FCDC, recently registered a six-rowed, smooth-awned, hulled, gen-

eral-purpose barley that is well-adapted to all soil zones in Western Canada. Called Muskwa, the semi-dwarf has strong straw, is smut resistance and has intermediate maturity rates equal to or better than Vivar. Although it yielded four per cent less than the feed checks (Vivar and AC Ranger), its resistance package, especially in terms of scald, compensates for this.

"It has a much wider adaptation across Western Canada as far as its disease resistance package goes, and will do well in dry and wet years," Juskiw explains.

Muskwa is a good option for feed and forage production, and a good rotational variety for managing scald. Other traits, such as lodging resistance and smooth awns, also make it a desirable feed/forage variety.

Looking forward, Juskiw says she intends to breed more scald resistance into malting barley without compromising quality. FCDC researchers have tried to get Seebe's scald-resistant gene into malting barley varieties as it's their most scald-resistant two-row variety, but this process has proved challenging.

"When it comes right to the end product, I think there's something about the scald-resistance genes from Seebe that's a negative malting material," Juskiw says. "We're still working on it so we don't have to use fungicide so much."

FCDC researchers are also investigating whether they can make malt barley varieties that will also be better feed. Watch November's *Barley Country* for more information.

Malting agronomy: the key is N

Research by Dr. John O'Donovan, of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC's) Lacombe Research Centre, has provided further insight into best practices for malting barley. His study has found:

- In general, seeding barley relatively early reduces excessive protein
- In most cases, seeding barley at 300 seeds/metre²—generating about 200 to 250 plants/metre², or 20 to 25 plants/foot²—optimizes overall yield and quality, improves kernel uniformity and reduces protein and beta-glucan levels. Seeding rates of more than 330 seeds/metre², however, increase the risk of reduced yield, reduce plumpness and show no great advantage in reducing protein or increasing seed uniformity
- Increasing nitrogen increases yield and kernel weight, but also increases protein and negatively affects nearly all other aspects of malting barley quality, including reductions in fine extract levels—which are very important to maltsters



Photos: Lori Loree

- Planting barley on barley generally reduces yield and quality, and increases disease as compared to planting barley on canola or field peas
- Lastly, barley yields are highest (without significantly increasing the protein levels) when planted on field pea residue.

During his study, O'Donovan also found malting varieties, in particular CDC Copeland and AC Metcalfe, responded differently to nitrogen. This led to his current study on nitrogen as it relates to yield and protein levels in malting barley. This new study, in its second crop year, compares five nitrogen rates on five varieties: AC Metcalfe (as a standard), Major, Bentley, Merit 57 and CDC Meredith.

"In general, all of the new varieties out-yielded AC Metcalfe," says O'Donovan. "On average, we got about a 17 per cent increase in yield with new varieties at most locations. AC Metcalfe and Major tended to have higher protein than the other varieties."

O'Donovan emphasizes findings so far are preliminary but he is hopeful once complete the study will help researchers and producers better understand nitrogen management for malting barley.

Pathology: know your enemy

Dr. Kelly Turkington, also with AAFC's Lacombe Research Centre, has a wide range of barley disease

and disease-resistance studies.

"Resistance is ultimately the key strategy to use," explains Turkington. "It doesn't add a lot of input cost if any, and you don't have to be worried about whether you have to spray."

He says other strategies that mitigate disease, particularly scald, include rotating varieties to reduce leaf disease and to increase productivity. Turkington says interest in continuous barley production for silage led to a number of rotational treatment experiments, including intercrops (growing barley, oats and spring triticale together). The goal is to develop strategies and tools for improved silage production.

"Last year was the end of our first three-year rotational cycle and we found, as hypothesized, our highest levels of significant disease were in the continuous barley," explains Turkington. "And as we started adding diversity, we saw a reduction in leaf disease severity and a corresponding increase in tonnage per unit area, in wet and dry silage yields. So we're continuing this particular trial for another three years."

Staying one step ahead of the scald pathogen remains a big challenge, but extensive studies have led to a good base of knowledge. Unfortunately, the level of understanding is not the same for net blotch.

In response, an ambitious multi-

year study is underway to map net blotch's genetic diversity across the Prairies, measure its fungicide sensitivity and determine how these various net-blotch strains react to net-blotch resistant barley varieties.

"The idea at the end of the study is to provide as much knowledge about net blotch as we have about scald to help plant breeders," explains University of Alberta PhD student Alireza Akhavan, who works on the project.

Tank mixing & application timing

Turkington also shared the 2010 results of studies on fungicide and herbicide tank mixing and application timing. While the check treatments had a huge scald outbreak (where only herbicide was applied), the disease was not significantly reduced when researchers tank mixed a half rate of Tilt fungicide with herbicide and applied it at the herbicide timing.

The most significant disease reduction occurred when a single full rate of Tilt fungicide was applied at the flag leaf emergence stage. The study, to be completed after the 2012 crop cycle, will give a better picture as to the utility of tank mixing herbicides and fungicides for barley leaf disease management going forward.

Anne-Marie Bruzga Luchak is the communications manager of the Alberta Barley Commission.

REGULATIONS

Look for the license when selling your barley

“Be sure your check-off dollars are supporting you and the entire barley sector”

BY TERRY BULLICK

It only happens in odd years. In the years ending in an odd number (2009, 2011, 2013, etc.), the Alberta Barley Commission issues new licenses to barley dealers. Licenses issued before July 31, 2011 are now expired. Licenses issued since Aug. 1, 2011 will expire on July 31, 2013.

“All barley dealers are legally required to have a Commission-issued license when they buy barley from a producer, or acquire barley from a producer for sale on the producer’s behalf,” explains Lisa Skierka, the Commission’s manager of office & projects. “We provide a physical copy of the license for dealers to display in their offices.”

License holders are legally bound to deduct and submit check-off dollars (service charges) on all barley purchases. Producer payment of check-off dollars is voluntary, however, producers who do not wish to pay check-off dollars must request a refund from the Commission, not their dealers.

Based on a barley price of \$170/tonne, the check-off rate is less than 0.60 per cent of the sale price (or slightly more than a penny a bushel).

Real value

Yet, these funds deliver real value to barley growers. They are used for industry development and are also the Commission’s primary revenue source. In 2009/2010, the \$1.5 million (net) of check-off dollars submitted to the Commission were invested in a variety of research and market development projects. These projects were designed to deliver benefits throughout the barley value chain. The estimated check-off revenue for 2010/2011 is \$2 million (net).

By working with industry partners and government, the value of check-off dollars can grow to between three to 12 times their original value. This type of research investment provides greater value to farmers.

In recent years, check-off dollars have resulted in: registration of a new malting barley variety, Bentley; leveraged funding of \$3.5 million from the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF) for feed research; a favourable and comprehensive study on using barley for bioproducts; and numerous changes in federal ag policy and regulations. Other projects include:

- Test 42, a simple but dramatic agronomy research project on how producers can reduce their

wild oat populations and input costs

- The 2008 renewal of the Alberta/Canada Barley Development Agreement between the Commission, the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and the agreement’s newest partner, ACIDF
- Finding the relationship between fibre content and fibre digestibility in forage barley
- \$300,000 of funding over three years for barley breeding, which will be matched by \$2.8 million in research funding through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Developing Innovative Agri-Products program.

Look for the license

When selling your barley, look for the license. When your barley dealer displays a valid barley license, you can be sure your check-off dollars are supporting you and

the entire barley sector.

In 2009/2010, 158 barley dealers were licensed. By the end of September 2011, a similar number are expected to be licensed.

While current remittance levels are estimated to be at 55 per cent, tracking the amount of unsubmitted check-off dollars remains a challenge for the Commission. More importantly, this shortfall undermines Alberta barley producers’ ability to remain competitive with their customers and other barley-producing nations.

“Barley growers are always looking for increased yields and lower input costs—and through check-off dollars we are able to meet some of these demands through research and development funding,” says Trevor Petersen, vice-chairman of the Commission. “It’s important for our members and everyone in the barley value chain to understand the importance of submitting check-off dollars.”

IF YOU’RE A BARLEY DEALER . . .

If you’re an Alberta barley dealer, you’re required by law to be licensed and to collect \$1/tonne on all barley purchased from primary producers and submit the funds to the Alberta Barley Commission.

To assist barley dealers in collecting and submitting barley check-off dollars, the Commission provides them with a copy of the Alberta Barley Commission Regulation 123/1999, one copy of a dealer’s license (signed by the Commission’s Board chairman and the manager of office & projects) and a monthly remittance report template.

Provincial regulations require dealers to verify the check-off with the barley producer at the time of sale. Typically, the details of the check-off are included on a receipt, grain ticket or cheque stub. At a minimum, the following information must be noted:

- Recipient of the check-off dollars (Alberta Barley Commission)
- Transaction date
- Transaction tonnage
- Check value (number of tonnes times \$1/tonne).

Check-off dollars must be submitted within 55 days from the end of the month in which the service rate was collected. For example, if you purchase barley on Oct. 5, the check-off dollars must be submitted by Dec. 25.

The buyer remittance template provided to dealers by the Commission is the preferred methods of reporting check-off submissions, although you can use your own format as long it includes:

- Your business’s name and mailing address
- The producer’s name, business/farm name and mailing address
- Number of tonnes in transaction
- Dollar amount of collected check-off
- Date of transaction.

The dollar amount of collected check-off must match the amount remitted to the Commission. Reports can be submitted by mail, fax or email.

For additional information, contact Jamie Kasper, accounting assistant, at jkasper@albertabarley.com or (403) 291-9111 ext. 27.

INTERVIEW

Q & A with Gerry Ritz, minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

BY ANNE-MARIE
BRUZGA LUCHAK

From plans to end the Canadian Wheat Board single-desk system and ongoing international trade negotiations to the release of the Rail Freight Service Review, change is in the air for Canadian agriculture. To discuss some of these key issues, *Barley Country* spoke with the Honourable Gerry Ritz, the minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to delve into what's in store for farmers and the industry.

Q: We recognize the federal government will be making changes to how the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) operates. In terms of these changes, is the government still on track to introduce new legislation this fall to remove the CWB single-desk system by Aug. 1, 2012?

GR: It's about time that Western Canadian barley farmers had the right to sell their own product—the same product that they grow and harvest—as they choose. We're going to give them that opportunity. That's our intention. We have been very open about our plan, and we encourage the Wheat Board to work with us in the best interests of farmers and help ensure a smooth transition into an open market.

Q: As demand for food grows, so does supply in new markets in developing countries. As markets shift, how will the federal government ensure Canadian agriculture remains competitive?

GR: A combination of innovation based on science and technology, and making sure trade routes stay open, based on sound science. Our government has always placed a high value on results-based agricultural innovation—that's why we're working together with industry to develop new products that respond to growing market demand.

Once we have the quality and quantity that is in demand, it's important for our government to keep a level playing field in markets around the world. In this way, we have opened up new markets for Canadian producers in Asia, Europe, South America, Africa and the Middle East.

Q: In the 2011 budget, the government announced a two-year, \$50-million Agricultural Innovation Initiative to support knowledge creation and transfer and increased commercialization of agricultural innovations. Are there future plans to ensure additional money is earmarked for agricultural research and innovation as we move beyond that

two-year timeframe?

GR: We will continue to put more monies into science and technology. We've committed more money to science and technology than any previous government. We know the future for agriculture relies on the pro-active side, not necessarily the reactive side of the business risk management. The more monies we put into science and technology, the better return farmers will see.

Q: In the cereals sector, our public breeding programs have been challenged over the past decade by declining funding and aging/retiring staff. Is there a plan to address this issue?

GR: When I became minister of agriculture, one of the first things I did was move to get away from kernel visual distinguishability (KVD), [which] stopped us from commercially developing any new wheat, durum or barley that looked like our Red Spring Wheat. We now have new varieties coming to the fore.

We also think that with the movement beyond a single desk, we'll have more development of seed varieties. . . . When farmers have the ability to market their own commodity, then there is a return on new varieties. We will build partnerships with industry and we will want all of the science based on results that industry is driving.

Q: In March 2011, the government released its response to the Rail Freight Service Review. Can you briefly sum up what changes the government is currently pursuing to the rail system? How closely are you working with your colleagues in transportation on this issue and when can farmers expect to see these changes come into affect?

GR: This is an important issue—being land-locked like we are in Western Canada, transport is a major cost to every farm out there. It takes a comprehensive approach and it's been a number of years getting to this situation, so I'd ask farmers to bear with us. We still very much favour the commercial end that we see out there, [but] many aspects must dovetail together. This is not just the railways—this is the complete value-chain on the transportation side that needs to sit down. We are seeing commercial agreements being driven in sectors beyond Wheat Board-controlled capacity.

Having said that, changing the single desk of the [CWB] will have a significant impact on logistics. We think that there's a far better job to be done between the line companies, the terminals and the port terminals without the Wheat Board in the mid-



Left to right, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz with Theresa Bergsma of the Manitoba Corn Growers Association, Todd Hames from the Canadian Canola Growers Association and D'Arcy Hilgartner from the Alberta Grains Council at the Grain Growers of Canada's summer meeting in July.

Photo credit: Grain Growers of Canada

dle of that, and we look forward to those debates.

Q: The federal government is conducting negotiations toward a Canada European Union Trade Agreement (CETA). Is it still hoped negotiations will be concluded by 2012?

GR: As Minister Fast [minister for International Trade and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway] stated, officials from Canada and the EU have exchanged ambitious offers on goods and government procurement. We are making progress, and we are still aiming to have negotiations completed by 2012.

Our government knows this would be a very important free trade deal for our producers and we'll keep pushing towards that end.

Q: Are you also hoping for progress on the bi-lateral negotiations with South Korea?

GR: We've been pushing hard to get some movement on beef. We now have a timeline nailed down and are moving forward on that, so hopefully this positive step forward will allow us to get back to the bargaining table to continue on with the free trade agreement with South Korea. We also have trade discussions underway with India and Japan, which are very exciting when it comes to grain as well.

Q: How will securing access to markets like these impact grain farmers and their customers in the Canadian meat industry?

GR: Canada is one of the very few countries in the world that has the capacity and ability to increase our production to meet that increasing demand and need. When I meet with countries around the world now, it's not so much, "How much is the commodity going to be?" It is, "Can you supply it?"

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Barley quality

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Photo: Michael Interisano

7. Do not use glyphosate as a pre-harvest treatment on any grain that will be used for seed or malting purposes.
8. Malt barley should be swathed at a height of 15 to 20 cm (six to eight in.) so it dries quickly, but heavy enough and overlapped well enough to feed properly and continuously into the combine.
9. Swathed barley can be combined when kernel moisture content is 13.5 per cent or lower.
10. High cylinder speed is the major cause of excessive skinned and broken kernels. For a 56-cm (22-in.) diameter cylinder, for example, the threshing speed for six-row barley, under good conditions, is about 850 to 875 rpm, but is reduced as the crop becomes drier during the day.

Considerably slower speeds should be used with two-row barley.

11. The space between concaves and the cylinder should be as close as possible, without over-threshing.
12. Sieves should be adjusted to provide for the return of the smallest quantity of tailings.
13. Malt barley crops are commonly straight combined. Standing crop resists weathering injury; however, shattering losses may be higher than with swathed crops.
14. Many producers have found it best to straight cut malt barley at 16 to 17 per cent moisture and then aerate the grain down to 13.5 per cent moisture.
15. While there can be pros and cons of swathing versus straight combining depending on conditions, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researcher Kelly Turkington of the Lacombe Research Centre has just begun a three-year study to determine if swathed malt barley is more prone to developing a higher microbial load, which could be detrimental to malt quality and acceptance.

For more details on barley production and research, visit the Alberta Barley Commission website at www.albertabarley.com and click on "agronomy."

BARLEY STORAGE TIPS

Protect and maintain the quality of your harvested crop with proper storage techniques.

- Barley in the 13 to 14 per cent moisture range can be safely stored at temperatures below 20°C (68°F) for up to five months.
- Ideally, feed barley should be harvested at no more than 14.5 per cent moisture and malt barley at 13.5 per cent.
- Crops harvested at higher moisture levels should be dried or aerated to bring moisture down.
- If barley needs to be dried, do not exceed drying temperatures of 45°C (113°F) for seed or malting barley to avoid risk of damaging their ability to germinate. For commercial barley, the temperature can be increased to 55°C (131°F) and for feed barley, safe drying temperatures can reach 80 to 100°C (176 to 212°F).
- Just about any type of clean, sound bin can be used for barley storage. Because insect infestations can mount quickly, all stored barley should be inspected every two weeks for insects, especially when the weather is warm. Hot grain (above 20°C or 68°F) will attract insects even if it tests dry.
- It is best to aerate or cool hot grain as soon as possible after harvest to reduce the risk of insect infestations. To check for pests, screen a representative bin sample with a 10-mesh sieve.
- Pests can be a concern even in winter, if grain is warm, so augering or transferring grain down to 5°C (41°F) will stop pests, and if the grain can be cooled to -20°C (-4°F), grain insects will be killed in two weeks.
- Barley stored at more than 14.8 per cent moisture is considered tough, and even grain at 14.5 per cent is considered too damp for safe storage. Barley at or near the maximum safe moisture can develop localized spoilage zones, generally near the top centre of the bin in winter and near the bottom centre of the bin in summer.
- To monitor for heating and spoilage, check bins every two weeks. Push your hand into the stored grain as deeply as possible to feel for warmth or crusting, or insert a long metal rod deep into the grain and feel it for warmth when removed. Commercial temperature probes and sensors inserted into the grain will provide a more accurate temperature reading.



MILESTONES

Looking back at 20 years of market development



Photos: Barley Country Archives

As part of its 20th anniversary, the Alberta Barley Commission continues its look back at key activities and accomplishments in the past two decades. In this issue of *Barley Country*, we highlight market development.

BY TERRY BULLICK

Grain handling

The Alberta Barley Commission called for major changes in grain handling and pricing at the Canada Grains Council's 1992 spring meeting. Clifton Foster, general manager of the Commission, said two critical areas needed immediate attention: a new pricing structure that would reward producers with premium prices for quality barley and the abolishment of topping off barley exports with "garbage" at terminal elevator.

Plebiscite call

The Alberta Barley Commission asked the Province of Alberta to conduct a plebiscite of producers about barley marketing in 1992.

"We can no longer assume that barley growers support the current system," said Tim Harvie, Commission chairman.

At the time, the Alberta government was proposing a Continental Barley Market, essentially a dual market for continental North America only, with the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) maintaining authority over offshore markets.

For the next 14 years, the Commission would continue to make this request. However, in 2006, the Commission began to make a concerted effort to partner with the CWB and other groups to optimize research that would lead to greater market development/new uses for barley. This partnership has led to a number of projects.

A call for change

A coalition of farm organizations Market Choices Alliance was formed to convince the federal government to hold a plebiscite on the Continental Barley Market, which was halted by a court order September 1993. In addition to the Commission, the alliance member included the Western Barley Growers Association, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and United Grain Growers.

"Farmers have wanted alternatives to marketing barley into the US through the Canadian Wheat Board for years," said Commission chairman Tim Harvie.

The previous summer, the federal government passed an Order in Council allowing barley to be sold directly by farmers and the trade into the U.S. It also allowed the CWB to continue marketing into this market as well.

Beef & barley

Between 1990 and 1995, Alberta's cattle production increased 31 per cent, bringing the province's herd to 4.8 million cattle and calves, and creating a huge demand and strong local prices for barley. This resulted in a great combination for Alberta: the integration of efficient barley producers, a growing cattle feeder industry and an expanding livestock industry.

Trade missions

The Commission led two trade missions in 1996, the first to Mexico in the winter and the second to Japan, China and South Korea in June.

The Commission had been working with livestock producers and researchers in Mexico for two years prior to this trip to raise awareness that barley is an excellent feed alternative for livestock production. In Mexico, barley is seldom considered for feed because it is primarily grown and imported for malt.

The mission to Asia was more exploratory.

"It was a very interesting trip," said Commission chairman Tim Harvie. "We had the opportunity to visit with customers first hand and to talk to the people who actually used our barley, not just the traders. We were well received in all three countries and the people we talked to were quite open and frank about their experiences with barley."

Court rules against market freedom

A federal judge ruled that restrictions in the *Canadian Wheat Board Act* did not contravene the protected rights covered by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The decision resulted from a trial initiated by the Commission, the Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) and 21 Prairie farmers.

"This is a major blow, not only to grain producers in Canada," said Brian Kriz, Commission chairman, "but to all Canadians. I think most of us take it for granted that, in a free and democratic country like Canada, we have the freedom to pursue our livelihood to the best of our ability, as long as we do not interfere with the rights of others."

Fractionation

The Commission and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development hired a consultant in 1999 to study the potential of developing a barley fractionation opera-

“**Between 1990 and 1995, Alberta's cattle production increased 31 per cent, creating a huge demand and strong local prices for barley**”

Looking back

continued from page 11

“
A study by the U of A's Beef Group found consumers prefer barley-fed beef”



tion in Alberta. The study's objectives included:

- Determine the market opportunities for grain fractions and by-products including starch, beta-glucans, lipids and proteins
- Determine the technical feasibility of fractionating barley
- Determine the economic feasibility of fractionating barley
- Define the investment opportunity for an Alberta-based plant.

A trip to Ottawa

In February 2000, a coalition of more than 40 farm and industry representatives went to Parliament Hill to ask government officials to follow through on reforming the grain handling and transportation system as outlined in the Estey report. The 1999 report recommended a framework for a more commercially oriented grain handling and transportation system. The Commission was represented by Ken Sackett, chairman; Terry Young, vice-chairman; and Brian Kriz, ex-officio.

Another call to the CWB

Delegates and directors attending the Commission's annual general meeting in December 2000 voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution calling for the removal of barley from the CWB's jurisdiction.

"We have been working hard at establishing a dual marketing system for western barley producers for many years, and it's been a tough struggle," said Ken Sackett, the Commission's chairman.

Province sends clear message

The *Alberta Wheat and Barley Test Market Act* received Royal Assent and came into effect on Jan. 1, 2003. The act sent a clear message to Ottawa and the CWB that Alberta would seek marketing options of barley and wheat outside the CWB.

With the passing of the act, the Alberta government began lobbying for marketing choice. Mark Hlady, the Calgary MLA who introduced the bill, asked the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister responsible for the CWB to "sign off" on the new Act. Failing this, the Alberta government said it would pursue other methods to achieve the act's objective of establishing a test open market for the purchase and sale of barley and wheat produced in Alberta.

Commercializing beta-glucans

Cevena Bioproducts Inc., a company conceived at the University of Alberta and with investments made by the Commission, made several steps toward commercialization in 2003. Cevena applied its patented fractionation technology to extract

valuable components from barley and oats. U of A researchers Drs. Thava Vasanthan and Feral Temelli developed the technology.

The company's first product was Viscofiber™, the highest quality beta-glucan concentrate available and a food ingredient similar to cornstarch. Extracting this component made barley attractive to a large and growing functional food market, which offers consumers healthful benefits beyond basic nutrition.

Barley makes it better

A study by the U of A's Beef Group found consumers prefer barley-fed beef. In 2002, the research team, led by Dr. Wendy Wismer, investigated consumer preference for barley-fed versus corn-fed beef. Researchers gathered the information from Canadian, Japanese and Mexican consumers, all key markets for Alberta beef.

The taste tests indicated that Canadian consumers preferred barley-fed beef to corn-fed beef 65 per cent to 35 per cent. Mexican consumers preferred barley-fed beef (56 per cent) to corn-fed beef (44 per cent). Japanese consumers reported little difference in terms of juiciness or tenderness overall, although some described barley-fed beef as "more flavourful and tasty."

Baking with barley

The Commission co-managed a 2004 project to build demand for whole grain barley flour in commercial baking. The project achieved some success among food service businesses looking for new ways to serve health conscious and variety-seeking consumers. For example, at the Good Earth Café in Calgary, barley-flour muffins were produced and sold daily in eight locations, equal to new demand for about three tonnes of food-quality barley a year.

The next year, 2005, whole-grain barley products debuted at Calgary Co-op bakeries. The product lineup included Savoury Barley Buns and Barley Bites, both a source of fibre with no trans fat.

Promoting free trade

The Commission was part of a delegation of farmers that travelled to Geneva in 2005 to promote the vital need for a free-trade future for agriculture at World Trade Symposium meetings.

The delegates concentrated on meeting with trade representatives from Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., China, India, Brazil and South America. The meetings were seen as an opportunity to dispel Canadian "agri-policy" myths and to show common ground for reform.



The Commission continued to commit considerable energy to World Trade Organization talks throughout 2006. "Without a good set of rules to govern every country's agriculture trade," wrote Commission chairman Doug Robertson in the 2006 annual report, "we will never see a reduction in the U.S. subsidies that have hurt Canadian farmers. Nor will we see any meaningful market access into the European Union and other protectionist regions and countries."

Agri-Food Discovery Place

In June 2004, the Commission committed \$200,000 over a four-year period to the University of Alberta for its Crop Utilization and Enhanced Materials Research Centre in Agri-Food Discovery Place.

The crop centre supports value-added and functional food components and bioproducts of both animal and plant products. This complements the facilities and services offered at the Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC) and the Agri-Business Incubation Centre in Leduc, the Centre for Agri-Industrial Technology, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research facilities at Lacombe, and the product testing facilities at Olds College.

The Alberta Barley Commission Food Processing Laboratory and the FPDC are focused on developing products that integrate the nutritional components of barley and other crops into products. Drs. Thava Vasanthan and Feral Temelli have conducted several studies and projects at the centre carried out on behalf of the Commission.

Barley as a functional food

For a number of years, Dr. Nancy Ames, a research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Winnipeg, has studied barley's potential as a functional food (a food that offers a health benefits beyond basic nutrition). Her work has included developing barley beverages and 100 per cent barley tortillas and taco chips and analyzing their texture and mouth feel, ease of dough handling, shelf life and other benefits to food processors and consumers.

Ames has also studied the glucose response (glycemic index) of some barley products to determine if they would be suited to diabetic diets.

Uses for barley protein

Since 2007, Dr. Lignyun Chen has worked in the Cereal Protein Research Program at the University

of Alberta's Department of Agricultural and Food Science. Her work has been jointly funded by the Commission and the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund and has focused on finding new value-added uses for barley protein, the grain's second-largest component after starch.

This has involved finding technologically and economically feasible ways to extract barley protein, understanding the characteristics of barley protein and determining where (or if) barley protein fits into the marketplace.

Barley as a biofuel

Faced with global warming and declining oil reserves, countries around the world are developing their capacity to produce energy from renewable resources. Recognizing this trend, the Alberta Barley Commission spearheaded the Barley Bioproducts Opportunities Project (BBOP). The Commission and the WBGA jointly managed the project. The project received \$262,500 from the federal government's Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative.

The project found barley could compete as a biofuel following a feasibility study and business plan. It looked beyond ethanol production, delving into the technical feasibility and market potential of other barley biorefining products, such as distillers' grains, and higher-value components, such as beta-glucans and antioxidants.

"We have several good stories to tell. New processing technologies are making barley biorefining much more competitive and attractive for producers and investors," BBOP project manager Carman Read said. "Plus, markets for renewable energy and high-quality food and feed are growing every year in Canada and around the world."

Interest in Shochu

Employees with the Sanwa Shurui Co. of Japan visited Alberta in 2008 as part of a new shochu barley commercialization project. The project is the result of a number of years of hard work and follows a trip to Japan in 2007 by Commission and Province of Alberta representatives.

In December 2007, the Agriculture & Food Council and the Agriculture & Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food program approved \$328,957 in funding for a shochu barley commercialization project. The shochu barley commercialization project will see the Commission,

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Rahr Malting Canada and producers across the province work together to develop a potential market for 60,000 tonnes/year of Canadian shochu barley.

Engaging feedlot operators

In 2009, the Commission launched a campaign to educate feedlot operators about the benefits of submitting barley check-off dollars. The campaign included administrative support to feedlot operators so they could integrate check-off submissions into their bookkeeping and recordkeeping.

The Commission subsequently joined the pulse, canola and winter wheat commissions of Alberta to promote the value and benefits of check-off dollars to producers and others throughout the industry in a campaign called Real Value for You.

Moving beyond traditional

In April 2010, the Commission hosted the Non-Traditional Barley Breeding Conference in Banff. More than 50 of the industry's leaders discussed a wide range of topics on non-traditional and genetically modified barley varieties. The conference was jointly organized with barley producer groups in Montana, Idaho and North Dakota as well as the U.S.'s national barley organization.

The event's purpose was not to solve the problems facing barley production in North America, but to better understand where solutions may be found and to determine how to move forward more effectively.

Making feed grain more competitive

Working with the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency and the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund, the Commission in 2010 played an advisory role in developing recommendations to invest \$8 million of funds from the Government of Alberta to make feed grains more competitive and to provide the best possible value to feed grain producers and livestock producers and feeders.

Developing innovative products

In 2010, the Commission pledged \$300,000 (\$100,000 a year for three years) in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Developing Innovative Agri-Products research projects which—with other industry partners—will invest a total of \$3,805,208 into research projects over the next three years.

“ Since 2007, Dr. Lignyun Chen has focused on finding new value-added uses for barley protein, the grain's second-largest component”

POLITICS

PC leadership candidates highlight their ag platforms

“
Six candidates are in the race to become the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta”

BY ANNE-MARIE BRUZGA LUCHAK

This fall, the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta (PCAA) will elect a new leader. Six candidates are in the race to become the party leader. But before they can claim that title, they'll have to win the support of card-carrying party members.

Voters will go to the polls on Sept. 17 and, if no candidate earns a majority, return for a second ballot on Oct. 1.

Barley Country contacted the candidates for a brief overview of their agricultural policies. Here are their responses, in alphabetical order.

Doug Griffiths

Doug Griffiths, who grew up on a mixed cattle and grain farm east of Coronation, has policy points surrounding land stewardship and agricultural sustainability as they relate to food security and the party's economic policy.

He favours preserving arable lands to meet future food needs, as well as encouraging new technology and research to produce better crops. At the same time, he doesn't want additional burdens or barriers on producers. His vision is for market-driven technology and efficiency.

Griffiths also believes in providing accessible, farmer-paid insurance programs to protect against uncontrollable risks (such as weather) and in providing industry aid in the case of catastrophic hardship (like droughts or the 2003 BSE crisis). He does not support long-term subsidies to the industry.

Overall, Griffiths believes research initiatives are key to ensuring agriculture competitiveness and that agriculture is the foundation of a healthy economy.

"It is critical that we strive to ensure Alberta's competitive advantage and to maximize the amount of food we produce here in Alberta," says Griffiths.

He summarizes his three areas of focus in agriculture as:

- Local food production: environmental issues and carbon taxes may soon be attached to food production much like they are in energy production. When the price of carbon credits is attached to a head of lettuce, Alberta would see an immediate local impact and needs to be prepared for this.



Doug Griffiths

- Exporting food: he wants to ensure Alberta opens international markets to secure success in the agricultural industry.
- Knowledge and experience: Alberta should also profit from exporting its expertise in food production, not just the food itself—Alberta's expertise is broader and includes new energy production and technologies, and biomedicines. Griffiths sees these skills become increasingly valuable internationally in the years ahead.

For more of Griffiths' policies, visit: betteralberta.ca.

Doug Horner

Doug Horner believes his experience as minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and his background in agriculture give him the knowledge and experience to improve and expand Alberta's ag industry.

As ag minister when the BSE crisis hit, Horner learned the importance of working with the value chain as well as the need for a diversified marketplace. He says his experience with establishing Westglen Milling reinforced his belief that securing outside markets is critical to maximizing agriculture production levels.

While ag minister, Horner introduced New Generation Cooperatives to bridge the gap between the commodity producers and consumers markets. He admits such co-ops can be improved upon, but says bringing producers into the value chain is critical for future ag success.

Horner also says Alberta must be aggressive in emerging markets.

"We need to actually deploy resources in those areas to help our producers and the value chains of agriculture and food sell in those marketplaces and create long-term relationships that aren't vulnerable to up-and-down commodity prices," he says.

Horner believes research and development will be central to developing food products for emerging markets and generating the best margins. While he feels Alberta is a leader in food research, he says the province must also create a new generation of ag employees and researchers. Horner admits, however, that agriculture needs long-term, patient capital as well as new financial incentives and models to ensure success.

"The Government of Alberta doesn't have all the great ideas," he says. "What we should be doing is creat-

ing the environment where the great ideas can form—where they can flourish. And then, in partnership with industry, we can put them into action."

For more information on Horner's policies, visit: hornerforalberta.ca.

Gary Mar

"Safe, healthy food, fibre and energy to Albertans and the world in an environmentally sustainable manner." That's Gary Mar's vision for agriculture. As Alberta's second-largest industry, agriculture is key to a balanced Alberta economy and healthy rural society, he says.



Gary Mar

Mar believes Alberta has the resources and infrastructure to meet growing food demand while focusing on "food safety, traceability and reduced environmental impacts through both public and private protocols."

For Mar, future industry success depends on improving transportation, irrigation, communication and power infrastructure, and working with the federal government to build access to continental and overseas markets.

While he sees Alberta farmers, ranchers and food processors as responsible for ensuring agricultural competitiveness through innovation and ingenuity, he says the provincial government's role is to "support the sector with sensible policies, research and innovation support, risk management tools, and strong education and training institutions."

Mar's four specific strategies are:

- Encourage expansion of value-added food processing by providing local demand for local production. Review government procurement policies to encourage Alberta-produced and -processed food is being used in Alberta institutions.
- Build stronger international relationships with Asian countries to solidify Alberta's reputation as a reliable supplier of safe, healthy food.
- Gain greater control over immigration policies (as Quebec and Manitoba have) to encourage a good labour supply for food processors, allowing immigrants to share innovation, capital and new ideas with ag producers.
- Support the development of markets for environmental goods and services so producers can be paid for the stewardship services they provide.

For more information on Mar's policies, visit: garymar.ca.

Ted Morton

In order to meet the demand of growing populations, Ted Morton believes agriculture must adapt to compete in global markets, improve access to both international and domestic markets and foster strong research and development. With research and development playing a key role in agricultural competitiveness, as leader he says he would continue to look forward—funding science-based research and recruiting strong researchers.



Ted Morton

Recognizing the vital role that farmers play in the economy and local communities, Morton says he would create open, two-way dialogue with all agricultural sectors—from large-sector cattle and grain farmers to smaller sectors such as the successful bee industry in northern Alberta.

“I would work to enhance the sustainability of the agriculture industry,” he says. “[And work] with industry sectors to find new ways of encouraging a new generation of farmers to choose to remain in rural communities and work on the farm.”

If premier, Morton says he would be a strong voice for Alberta farmers, advocating for them in Canada and around the world. He says he would work closely with industry and the federal government to increase access to international markets.

Domestically, he plans to harmonize regulations between provinces to eliminate prohibitive interprovincial trade barriers.

In terms of anticipated changes to the CWB’s single-desk system, Morton calls them a welcome change for “those of us who have long fought for marketing choice and common sense.” He wants to work with the Alberta Barley Commission and other partners during the transition into this new marketing system.

For more information on Morton’s policies, visit: tedmorton.ca.

Rick Orman

Describing himself as a traditional conservative and fourth-generation Albertan, Rick Orman believes agriculture and rural communities have shaped the province’s core values, and will continue to make major contributions to Alberta’s economic growth.

Orman says all levels of government must work together to support the agricultural sector through pricing, infrastructure support (like shipping, trans-



Rick Orman

portation and internet), research and development, and retention of people in rural communities.

His strategy includes aggressive marketing to retain and expand mar-

kets, and vigorously monitoring competition and threats to Alberta’s market share.

If elected leader, Orman says he would expect the minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to be visible and accountable, and would empower both the agriculture industry and rural MLAs in decision- and policy-making. Orman cites the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* as “a terribly destructive example” of policy made behind closed doors.

“I am the only candidate who is committed to repealing this legislation,” Orman says. “It is unbelievable to me that in a province like Alberta we would pass a law that confiscates private property.”

In terms of the CWB, Orman says a government under his leadership would work closely with barley growers to ensure Alberta takes a leadership role in promoting and marketing barley’s full value chain in an open market. He would work with the federal government to explore cost-effective ways to ensure Alberta’s agricultural interests are more vigorously represented in other countries.

“I am a very strong believer in grass roots policy-making,” Orman says, “and that new focus will help ensure that the interests and concerns of agriculture and rural communities are fully understood by all MLAs and the legislature.”

For more information on Orman’s policies, visit: voterickorman.com.

Alison Redford

Alison Redford wants to make Alberta a global leader in agriculture production as well as in the research and development of commodities and niche-market goods. She envisions Alberta as a preferred supplier to international markets through tax incentives and flexible regulation to strengthen the industry. In turn, this will build Alberta’s reputation as a competitive producer known for quality, reliability, innovation and environmental stewardship.

Redford promises strong support to organizations such as AVAC and the Alberta Capital Finance Authority. She would also create a comprehensive incentive program to: encourage use of marginal land; set aside land for wildlife habitat; and to adopt new technology, innovation and energy-efficient production.

When it comes to research, funding is key for Redford.

“I will provide stable, long-term funding to organizations, institutes and universities dedicated to research, development and implementation of agricultural technology,” she says.

Redford also wants to build on the existing SuperNet via a public-private partnership to ensure farmers have fast access to the infor-

mation they need to make business decisions.

Redford’s specific policy points include:

- Working with the federal government and international organizations to ensure Alberta capitalizes on homegrown advances. For instance, she would strengthen relations with the Canada Grain Commission to secure the timely approval of new varieties.
- Extending the focus on energy efficiency to include programs for the food-processing sector. She would also establish public-private partnerships to help businesses capitalize on the geothermal power they produce, but do not use.
- Ensuring government regulation is flexible, and allows for production and sale of non-commodity goods.
- Collaborating with the federal government to secure market access for Alberta’s producers, establishing them as competitive, long-term preferred global suppliers.

For more on Redford’s policies, visit: alisonredford.ca

VOTING SNAPSHOT

The first ballot to elect a new leader of the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta (PCAA) will be Sept. 17, with advance polls on Sept. 13. If necessary, a second ballot will be on Oct. 1, with advance polling on Sept. 27. Polls will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each voting day, and poll locations will be advertised in newspapers and on albertapc.ab.ca.

Eligible voters must be: Canadian citizens; a minimum of 16 years old; a resident of Alberta for at least six months prior to the voting date; and members in good standing of a provincial Progressive Conservative constituency association.

PCAA memberships may be purchased:

- Through local PCAA constituency associations, campaign teams, the PCAA’s Edmonton or Calgary offices or online at albertapc.ab.ca
- At any polling station during voting hours.

TECHNOLOGY

Tweeting, tagging and posting for farmers

BY ABBY MILLER



Farmers are increasingly using social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to be part of industry-wide conversations.

You've heard of social media, but do you really know what it is and, more importantly, how it applies to you?

Social media—also called social networking—is engaging with others in interactive, online conversations. Social media tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, podcasts and websites with a “Share” icon or a link to open forums.

Steeped in technology, social media is really about people and the relationships it fosters. It allows users to have open, immediate communications, access to information and, above all, promotes real connections between people.

Social media goes beyond updating your Facebook status or sharing what you had for breakfast on Twitter. It is also a way of doing business, sharing ideas and being a part of a conversa-

tion—any conversation—from breakfast foods to the latest barley prices.

For ag producers, social media is more than posting information—it is a way to connect to a large audience and participate in relevant conversations. Social media allows producers to build online communities, maintain relationships with clients and speak up on issues of concern.

Shaun Haney, owner of Haney Farms and founder of RealAgriculture.com, is a high-profile proponent of social media in agriculture. He believes social media is a valuable tool that allows farmers to be more engaged in dialogue with each other.

“The major advantage that social media creates is the ability to interact in real time with a wider network of people with similar interests,” said Haney. “For example, getting agonomic advice and suggestions from

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PLAN BEFORE YOU USE

To successfully use social media, it helps to understand why you are using it. For businesses, social media needs to be a part of an overall communication strategy. And you should know what you want to say—these applications have some neat tools and flashy add-ons, but the message still needs to be more important than the medium.

COMMONLY USED SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter

Twitter allows you to “tweet”—make brief, immediate updates in 140 characters or less (and yes, spaces count). An @ symbol appears before a name in order to indicate it is a Twitter account. To sign up, visit www.twitter.com.

Facebook

Facebook currently has more than more than 750 million active users, including a growing number of businesses or associations with pages representing their organization.

In order to follow such a page, click its “like” box. First, however, you need to create your own Facebook profile. Remember, you can share as much or as little information about yourself as you want. To create a Facebook profile, visit facebook.com.

YouTube

While many post personal videos onto YouTube (youtube.com), organizations are increasingly hosting dedicated YouTube channels with content such as product demonstrations, spokesperson addresses and corporate newsclips.

Blogs

More and more organizations use blogs to share information in a more engaging way. Blogs are the most flexible of all social media tools as text, photos, video, podcasts, etc. can be posted on them and visitors can comment on the content. Blogs can also be indexed and archived, making content easy to find with search engines, which often place blogs within top 10 search results.

Podcasts

These audio posting are often used by popular radio shows, such as Call of the Land, but are also used for lectures, book readings, technical explanations, music releases, corporate updates and a variety of how-to topics.

More and more organizations are using podcasts to share information with stakeholders as files are easy to download and easy to listen to on cellphones, computers and other devices.

RSS feeds

Really Simple Syndication, or RSS, is a way to publish frequently updated content. Users subscribe to an RSS feed through a website, Twitter account or blog. They are then notified any time new online information is added or changed.

AG SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Ag Canada's website features an RSS feed; for the department's Facebook page, search facebook.com.

Agri-Ville.com

The comprehensive online ag resource's Twitter feed @AgriVille/westcdnag is specifically for Western Canadian farmers.

Alberta Barley Commission

The Commission's official Twitter account is @AlbertaBarley; for its Facebook page, search facebook.com.

Alberta Canola Producers Commission

Reach this Commission on Facebook at facebook.com/albertacanola and on Twitter at @AlbertaCanola. You can also follow it at youtube.com/albertacanola and sign up for podcasts and an RSS feed at canola.ab.ca.

Canadian Federation of Agriculture

Link into the Canadian Federation of Agriculture through Twitter (@CFAFCA), Facebook and RSS, both of which can be reached through cfa-fca.ca.

Canadian Wheat Board

Get the latest news and information from the Canadian Wheat Board's Twitter account at @prairiewheat; for YouTube content, visit youtube.com/canadianwheatboard.

RealAgriculture.com

In addition to posts on RealAgriculture.com's blog, this page is a hub for local producers to discuss topic of importance; the Twitter feed is @realagriculture. Founder Shaun Haney also shares social media advice and industry updates on his Twitter account, @shaunhaney.

The Weather Network

Get immediate weather news and updates via Twitter from @wxnetwork_ab or follow the network at facebook.com/theweathernetwork, which also features a YouTube link.

“Social media is a way to connect to a large audience and actually be a part of conversations throughout the industry”



SAVE THESE DATES

The ALBERTA BARLEY COMMISSION
invites you to attend our:

ANNUAL REGION MEETINGS

Region 1	Brooks	November 24
Region 2	Rosebud	December 1
Region 3	Lacombe	November 23
Region 4	Vegreville	November 24
Region 5	Westlock	December 2
Region 6	Fahler	November 29

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Banff December 7 to 9

For details, see News & events on page 24 &
the next issue of *Barley Country* (November 1).



AT A GLANCE:

Barley supply and disposition

	2009/2010	2010/2011 forecast	2011/2012 forecast
Seeded area (hectares)	3.51 million	2.80 million	3.17 million
Harvested area (hectares)	2.91 million	2.39 million	2.65 million
Yield (tonnes/hectare)	3.26	3.19	3.25
Production (tonnes)	9.52 million	7.60 million	8.60 million
Imports (tonnes)	42,000	25,000	35,000
Total supply (tonnes)	12.40 million	10.21 million	9.88 million
Exports (tonnes)	2.15 million	1.70 million	1.8 million
Food & industrial use (tonnes)	141,000	130,000	135,000
Feed, waste & dockage (tonnes)	7.28 million	6.85 million	6.87 million
Total domestic use (tonnes)	7.67 million	7.26 million	7.28 million
Carry-out stocks (tonnes)	2.58 million	1.25 million	.80 million
Average price	\$153/tonne (\$3.33/bushel)	\$175–\$195/tonne (\$3.81–\$4.24/bushel)	\$180–\$210/tonne (\$3.92–\$4.57/bushel)

All data as of June 7, 2011
Source: Canada: Grains and Oilseeds Outlook 2011-12, Statistics Canada/Market Analysis Division of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Tweeting, tagging and posting

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agronomists from around the world instead of just the guys at the coffee shop. The creation of a global virtual coffee shop allows producers to increase the rate and capacity of learning. This learning benefits agriculture in major ways."

A new technical frontier for some, others in agriculture are successfully using social media. A 2010 survey by Farm Credit Canada found slightly more than half (54 per cent) of all agricultural producers use at least one social media network for personal or business use.

On Canadian Beef's Facebook page, more than 4,600 visitors have given the Beef Information Centre a thumbs-up (literally their approval of content). Syngenta Global uses Twitter and RSS feeds from their website (see sidebar on page 16 for explanations). New Holland Agriculture has its own YouTube page, featuring product videos, how-tos and testimonials.

On RealAgriculture.com, Haney posts blogs, polls and videos to advance agricultural conversations. One of the most useful pieces of ad-

vice he shares is a video on using Twitter, which explains how to find, follow and converse with others—in 140 characters or less.

One Alberta ag group that's embraced social media is the Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC).

"The three biggest websites in the world are Google, Twitter and Facebook. So if we want to be a part of where people are going, we have to be there," says Rick Taillieu, ACPC's Grower Relations and Extension coordinator.

Taillieu says the ACPC has seen its largest social media growth on Twitter. The reason, he says, is because Twitter is designed for smart phones, which farmers have on them all the time.

"You can be in the field, take a photo with your phone, upload it immediately and have other growers commenting and interacting with you right away."

Haney also believes in the power of a real time connection. By using a hashtag (the # sign) and placing it in front of a shortened topic heading or

keywords, users can instantly search out conversation streams over Twitter. For example, using #westcndag—short for Western Canadian agriculture—allows a search for posts on this topic.

"The ability to search by words or defined hashtags, such as #westcndag, allows for easy access to particular information of interest," says Haney. "One of the most practical applications of Twitter is to ask questions to a broad network of people. For example, 'I want to plant a new two-row feed barley in the Airdrie area. What would you recommend? #westcndag.'"

Based on the hashtags and the keywords in a tweet, you are likely to get answers that will help you make a decision, Haney says.

See November's *Barley Country* for social media education opportunities as well as more information on the Alberta Barley Commission's growing use of social media.

Abby Miller is a Calgary-based writer.

Charting the future

continued from page 3

"I believe most barley growers are looking forward to the option of an open market and to new market opportunities, whether it's niche markets or full-blown export programs or more value-added," Sawyer says. "All aspects of the barley industry will be affected and that has the potential to be a good thing for farmers."

Challenges ahead

Can the CWB survive without a monopoly? Pilger doesn't think it can.

"Australia had a system just like Canada's, with the Australian Wheat Board. They prepared for [losing their monopoly]. They had a grain handling system; they had collection points," he says.

"They also had a large cash fund for buying the grain that they got through years of check-offs from farmers' grain. Those are advantages the Canadian Wheat Board doesn't have. And the Australian Wheat Board only lasted two or three years after losing its monopoly. If we say no more monopoly, it's just a matter of time until the Canadian Wheat Board is gone."

Phillips disagrees.

"The reality is the Australian Wheat Board failed because it lost huge support and credibility over paying bribes to Saddam Hussein's

family, not because of its business model," he says. "In Canada, we have many stories of successful cooperatives. Federated Co-op, for example, is running gas stations all over the Prairies, going head-to-head with the big oil companies. Credit Unions are competing with the big five banks and they are doing very well."

Phillips adds: "The reality is a lot of people in the West believe in that co-operative spirit and they like dealing with a credit union, buying gas at a co-op, buying farm and food supplies at a local co-op."

Pilger counters: "You cannot compare the viability of high-margin retail businesses with low-margin commodity production and trading. The Wheat Board simply cannot compete with the four or five large multinational companies in the business of moving grain. In the short term, sure they can compete, but it will not last, just like your corner store doesn't last when a Walmart moves to town."

Access to grain-handling facilities is a key issue for the CWB as it can't own facilities under the current *Canadian Wheat Board Act*. "Access would have to be at a reasonable cost and we would have to get equal priority when it comes to shipment," Oberg says.

The WPGA's Otto sees this issue as

less of an impediment.

"There are grain companies that don't own physical facilities and yet market grain," says Otto. "They arrange handling agreements with elevator companies and export terminals. There are brokers who don't own any physical facilities who handle millions of tonnes of grain."

"The producer-owned inland terminals built through the last 10 or 15 years in Western Canada are going to be looking for business," he adds. "The CWB could approach them to do contractual agreements to handle the grain they sell. The inland terminals already have contracts with export terminals to move grain, and they could be part of that."

Regardless of the debate surrounding the CWB, or how the new CWB model may work, the federal government is moving ahead with plans to eliminate the single-desk system by August 2012.

As the process unfolds, Sawyer believes the Commission's role is to keep communicating with stakeholders throughout the supply chain.

"The federal government has repeatedly said they are eliminating the CWB's single desk," said Sawyer. "We know there will be challenges ahead, but we are committed to ensuring barley growers' needs are being met."

“The end of the single desk will encourage investment and drive competition that farmers have been asking for”

TRANSITION

New model predicted for CWB

BY CAROLYN KING

Should the Government of Canada pass new legislation changing the way Western Canadian grain is marketed through the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), the organization will likely reorganize.

The CWB has been investigating various models, notes Allen Oberg, the CWB's chairman and a farmer near Forestburg.

"Over the years that I've been involved with the Wheat Board, we have looked at dozens of different models and always with the same measurement, which is how much does each of these models return in value back to producers," he says. "I'm of the view that our current model delivers the most value. Some other options, like a partial single desk, such as a model with an open domestic market for instance, would still return in my view some value to

producers. But given the announcements from the minister, those models are off the table."

Oberg says the CWB will suggest a model to the minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Gerry Ritz.

"However, for this model to be successful will take some major concessions from the government," Oberg says. "Number one is a capital base requirement because at present the Wheat Board uses borrowing guarantees from the federal government to finance its operations. So, either those need to continue or some sort of capital base needs to be provided. And the other thing is access to grain-handling facilities at country and more importantly at port. I think we'd be suggesting some sort of regulated access."

Richard Phillips, the executive director of the Grain Growers of Canada, says "the Wheat Board really needs to work with the Government of Canada and with farm groups like the Grain Growers

to determine what their new business model will look like."

He adds that a number of crucial questions must be answered, such as: How will the CWB get access to capital or lines of credit? Would that involve a federal government guarantee on their loans or is there some other way they can raise capital? Should they be able to buy all kinds of other crops? Should they be able to buy a share of a terminal?

"The Grain Growers would be very supportive of the Wheat Board becoming business-oriented," Phillips says. "We're prepared to lobby the minister hard for the Wheat Board to help them get whatever model it is that they need in that marketplace to be successful."

The CWB held a planning session in July to further develop the model it will suggest and to address issues like ownership structure. At press time, no further details were available.

“We have looked at dozens of different models and always with the same measurement: what is the return in value back to producers”

REPRESENTATION

Call for director and delegate nominations

“Nominations for director positions must be filed with the Commission’s Calgary office in writing by Oct. 31”

BY TERRY BULLICK

Barley producers interested in becoming a director or delegate for the Alberta Barley Commission are invited to put their names forward for nomination.

The Commission’s Board consists of nine directors: one regional director for each of the Commission’s six regions and three directors-at-large representing the entire province.

Directors and directors-at-large are nominated and elected by eligible barley producers for three-year terms and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. A region may have one director and one director-at-large, meaning no more than two Board of Director positions can be filled per region.

Nominations for director and director-at-large positions close Oct. 31. Voting takes place at the Commission’s regional meetings. Election results for regional directors

are announced at respective regional meetings, while election results for directors-at-large are announced at the annual general meeting on Dec. 8.

Each region also has a minimum number of delegate positions based on crop production for that region. Delegate nominations and elections occur at each of the regional meetings where nominees are elected for two-year terms. Nominations for delegate positions can be made on the day of each regional meeting, from the floor.

Positions

Positions up for election this year include:

Director-at-large, with the incumbent eligible for re-election. Nominations must come from Regions 1, 2, 4 or 6.

Region 1: one director, with the incumbent eligible for re-election, and three delegates.

Region 2: one director, with the incumbent eligible for re-election, and two delegates.

Region 3: five delegates.

Region 4: two delegates.

Region 5: three delegates.

Region 6: one delegate.

Nominations

Nominations for director positions must be filed with the Commission’s Calgary office in writing by Oct. 31. Candidates for directors and directors-at-large must have their nomination papers signed by at least 10 eligible producers. Candidates must also provide written consent for their nomination.

To be eligible to vote in Commission elections or be nominated as a director or delegate, Alberta barley producers must remit check-off dollars to the Commission.

For more information, contact Lisa Skierka, the Commission’s manager of office & projects, at lskierka@albertabarley.com.

ADMINISTRATION

Commission welcomes new staff & contractors

In an effort to serve its members better, the Alberta Barley Commission has recently hired several new staff and contractors.

Syeda Khurram signed on as accountant in April. Khurram and her family moved to Calgary from Toronto, where she worked at Empathica Inc. as a corporate accountant. She will work closely with Jamie Kasper, who recently became accounting assistant. Kasper’s previous position as administrative assistant was filled by Tania Galanis, whose background is primarily as a medical receptionist and office coordinator.

Two new contractors have also joined the Commission team. Linda Whitworth, a home economist who has worked with the Alberta Egg Producers and the Beef Information Centre, is the Commission’s new marketing & events manager. She is coordinating the 2011 regional meetings and annual general meeting, as well as other events and projects. Whitworth also has extensive experience in food marketing and consumer relations.

Anne-Marie Bruzga Luchak has taken on the role of communications manager. The Commission is moving some communications in-house as a direct result of the Board’s strategic

planning session this past spring, which highlighted the need for more directed communications to farmers, directors, delegates and consumers. Bruzga Luchak was most recently the communications manager at the University of Calgary’s Graduate Students’ Association

“Farming is the foundation our province was built on,” says Bruzga Luchak. “I’m really looking forward to working with barley growers and

improving our communications with them.”

“Our new team members all had the opportunity to work with the people they were replacing, which made for a seamless transfer,” says Lisa Skierka, manager of office & projects. “The new office staff are committed to understanding the agriculture industry and working with barley growers in a productive, efficient manner.”

Q & A with Ritz

continued from page 9

Can you guarantee that you’ll have that commodity this fall after harvest?”

Of course, with the vagaries of weather, we always have some surprises there, but there’s a growing demand for a top quality product, there’s more emphasis put on quantity and nutrition value—and that’s good news for Canadian producers.

Q: In the big picture of global agriculture, what role will Canada play in the coming years? And what should barley producers be doing to help see that vision come true?

GR: I think there are a lot of uses of barley that we haven’t touched on and there are new barley varieties that are starting to look really good. We’re starting to see different protein requirements around the world. We’re seeing barley being used for other [purposes] than just making beer or feeding animals ... we’re talking about barley used in the food supply a lot more than it is now. I think that’s all good news for the barley sector—the world is your oyster at this point.

MEETING

Creating a stronger voice for crop producers

BY MADELEINE BAERG

The who's who of Canadian grain production attended the Grain Growers of Canada's (GGC's) three-day summer meeting in Winnipeg in early July. Their goal: to stay informed and make their industry's voice resonate with the federal government.

Highlights of the meeting included:

Business risk management

Farmers often say existing agri-support programs should change. Lately, the federal government has indicated it's willing to listen. Danny Foster, director general of Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada's Business Risk Management (BRM) program, spent an entire afternoon talking with participants about improving business risk management programs.

The extended discussion was important, says Richard Phillips, the GGC's executive director.

"If you only have a short time, you come up with simplistic solutions and don't think through the full consequences of change."

Discussions surrounding the AgriInvest program, which helps producers manage small income declines, brought early friction, with large-scale producers arguing for the removal of the program's cap. Once they realized, however, that 48,500 producers would receive less in order for 1,500 producers up against the cap to receive more, those suggesting change backed down.

Similarly, calls for making Agri-Stability—the program that protects farm operations from large margin declines—more predictable and responsive softened when participants realized the consequences. Change would slow recovery in good years due to a lag margin, reporting during harvest, or lead to being lumped in with neighbours for area averages.

"As we kept talking through the programs, amazingly we came to consensus. It was really good to see how much government thought has gone into these programs," says Phillips.

Participants made several recommendations that Foster said he would take back to government. For AgriStability, they suggested a 30-percent advance, low enough to minimize overpayments but high enough to support producers with major shortfalls.

For the AgriInsurance program, the group suggested the three Prairie provinces buy insurance together to save on premiums. Foster recommended producers lobby their respective provincial ag ministers, but cautioned that getting the provinces to agree might be difficult.

And, for AgriRecovery—the disaster relief component of BRM—the group recommended having more defined insurance coverage given the increasing broad and creative way these funds are accessed.

"The key message we need to bring back to producers is that you should make sure you are enrolled in these programs. You shouldn't be expecting ad hoc dollars in the future," says Matt Sawyer, chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission, who attended the meeting.

Trade

Canada is currently working on a number of important trade agreements with Morocco, Japan and South Korea. Doug Forsyth, director of AAFC's Trade Negotiations Division, said the recently signed Moroccan agreement is particularly important to the Canadian grain industry, since upwards of one-fifth of its durum is exported to the country. He also outlined the potential of an agreement with India. Still in the early stages of negotiation, the agreement could make Canadian commodities and products more accessible to the country's enormous middle-class population.

CETA, the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement currently under negotiation, offers considerable potential for Canadian agri-products. In exchange for access to this huge market, the EU is seeking a number of



Stephen Vandervalk, president of the Grain Growers of Canada, speaks to reporters in Winnipeg outside of the organization's annual summer meeting.

considerations, including increased presence in Canadian liquor stores and increased opportunity to bid on Canadian infrastructure projects. Both negotiating teams are also trying to define the exact terms of tolerance for cross contaminants in Canadian grains and oilseeds crops imported by the EU. The agreement may be completed by 2012.

Public research

Ongoing funding for public research has been challenged over the years and the GGC has been lobbying the federal government to return program funding to 1980 levels. New committees are looking at future funding models and are talking with other stakeholders over the summer and fall for eventual presentation to the minister for consideration.

“It was really good to see how much government thought has gone into risk management programs”

Resolutions key for participation in Commission

Resolutions are key to providing an opportunity for grassroots participation by eligible producers in the affairs and direction of the Alberta Barley Commission.

Eligible producers may present a resolution to the Commission's Board of Directors for consideration and action.

Resolutions are formal written statements accompanied with a proposed solution of a problem. They are to be clear, specific, brief and based on fact.

Producers may raise resolutions at any time of the year but they are to be presented to a director at a regional meeting. They are then submitted to the Commission's Resolutions Committee for consideration. Once reviewed by the Resolutions Committee, resolutions may be presented at the annual general meeting for consideration, where they are passed or defeated by a simple majority of votes.

Resolutions passed at a regional meeting may not be modified at the annual general meeting.

The Commission's Resolutions Committee consists of two directors, one delegate and one staff and is responsible for preparing all resolutions for presentation at the annual general meeting, including amalgamating and/or withdrawing resolutions when necessary.

For more information, contact Lisa Skierka, the Commission's manager of office & projects, at lskierka@albertabarley.com.

PROFILE

Planning and educated risk-taking behind successful Clive seed farm

“
We’re in a unique situation where we can easily talk to those interested in our seed”



Ward Oatway of Clive produces grain seed with his father Grant. “All of our contacts help us select and market our varieties. We work with them to ensure our seed will meet quality and match trends. Seed farming requires extra work to meet or exceed guidelines set out by the Canadian Food

Inspection Agency and Canadian Seed Growers’ Association, but it’s important to us to help producers meet required standards for malt, as well as high quality for other crops,” Oatway says.

Photo: Lori Loree

BY ROBYN ST-HILAIRE

When Thomas Edison famously said, “Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning,” he could have easily been talking about Ward Oatway, a seed producer with a 485 hectare (1,200-acre) farm east of Lacombe, near Clive.

The 40-year-old producer splits the farmland with his father, Grant, growing seed for peas, wheat and barley, in addition to a commercial canola crop.

“Right now we have 162 hectares (400 acres) dedicated to producing seed for CDC Meredith, CDC Austenson, Seebe, Gatsby and AC Metcalfe,” says Oatway. “We selected these varieties by gathering information last year on what we thought would be the trend in the local market for this year.”

But planning for “hot” varieties a year ahead is similar to trying to gauge how well a stock will do—meeting with investors and stakeholders is important, but Oatway says it still adds up to an “educated crashshoot.”

“Fortunately, we’re in a unique situation where we can easily talk to those interested in our seed,” explains Oatway. “One of the region’s malt plants, RAHR Malting, is located in Alix, 22 kilometres (14 miles) east of Clive, and they let us know what their contractual agreements require for seed. I also keep in regular contact with our customers—most of them live in central

Alberta—and they let me know what their own plans and requirements are.”

Oatway also has the benefit of having contact with breeders who work with Alberta Agriculture’s Lacombe Field Crop Development Centre. His wife, Lori, runs the centre’s Cereal Quality Lab. As well, he worked at the centre for over a decade before embracing full-time farming five years ago, once his father began planning for retirement.

“All of our contacts help us select and market our varieties. We work with them to ensure our seed will meet quality and match trends. Seed farming requires extra work to meet or exceed guidelines set out by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Canadian Seed Growers’ Association, but it’s important to us to help producers meet required standards for malt, as well as high quality for other crops,” explains Oatway.

“I guess you could say our planning is built on continual conversation and marketability, but factors in the old adage that ‘a plan never survives contact,’ especially with curveballs like the weather.”

A series of career curveballs have helped shape the Oatway farm. Grant traded his surveyor career in the 1970s to take up the family profession. During that time, the family brought Klages barley seed to the area from the U.S., creating a niche market and shifting the farm’s focus to seed production.

“My first career choice also wasn’t

agriculture,” shares the younger Oatway. “I completed my criminal justice degree in 1993 and, before beginning a law enforcement career, I went on an agricultural exchange to New Zealand. It was there that I grew the confidence to know I could run a farm, even though I was raised on one. I began working at Alberta Agriculture on my return as a summer student, which led to bigger opportunities over 13 years, including work as a lab technician.”

Today, in addition to raising seed, Oatway is on the Board of Directors for the Alberta Seed Growers Association. One of its current priorities is to curtail the spread of *Fusarium graminearum* in Alberta through awareness and encouraging testing. As a seed producer, Oatway is also required to have zero tolerance when selling or transporting seed.

He’s also a busy dad, involved with coaching softball for his daughters Ezri, 10, and Brie, 8 as well as president of the local minor softball chapter.

“We’ve got a lot going on and fortunately we’re in a position where we can focus on the customers we have at the size we are. It’s great to bring in new customers to fill in the gaps, but the long-term plan is to keep our current customers happy,” Oatway says. “That’s a plan that’s tried and true.”

Robyn St-Hilaire is a Calgary writer and regular contributor to *Barley Country*.

REPORT

Rail service review sees positive progress

BY RICHARD PHILLIPS

For as long as farmers have shipped their product by rail it seems they've had cause for complaint about service.

The problem has been especially nagging in recent years.

Finally, and thanks to considerable effort, relief appears to be on the horizon. In March, the Government of Canada accepted the recommendations (see sidebar) of the Rail Freight Service Review panel.

The Grain Growers of Canada participated in the review through a coalition representing the grain, mining and lumber industries—the vast majority of the railways' revenue.

Throughout the review, the coalition sought reciprocal penalties to make railway companies more accountable and give shippers more predictable and timely service.

Such measures will go a long way to ensuring shippers get a fair deal. That, however, is a broad statement as Transport Canada has yet to attach any timelines to implementing the recommendations. In the absence of timelines, the changes are not a current priority.

To make them a priority, the GGC and other shippers ramped up a campaign in August to assertively remind the government of its commitment.

While we're probably one to two years from seeing the recommendations implemented, I think once they're in place we'll see benefits flow immediately to the farm gate.

For example, suppose in August a pulse processor sees a premium overnight spot price in Turkey for November delivery of peas or lentils. This means shipping in September to be in Montreal by early October and loaded on a freighter by mid-October. When the processor asks: "Can I actually get the 100 rail cars I need in time?" The answer right now is probably not.

As a result, the processor takes a \$1/bushel hit to cover the penalties for late delivery. Right there the basis

is widened and producers immediately receive less money.

What we're trying to find is equity in such penalties. If farmers can't deliver in time, they should pay the penalties. If shippers can't deliver in time, they should pay the penalties. If terminals can't load or offload in time, they should pay the penalties.

For years, we thought poor rail service was exclusive to agriculture. Interestingly, during the rail service review other industries told us stories similar, or worse, than ours. It turned out every single commodity was getting poor service.

We found companies representing 90 per cent of CN's and CP's revenue were unhappy with rail service. At that point, the government couldn't ignore this issue anymore. It was clear poor service was a systemic problem.

To give credit to CN, it has been improving communications if it's going to be behind schedule. That doesn't get your freight there any sooner, but the company is working on communications to allow you to



Richard Phillips

better plan for these delays.

Still, we need reciprocal penalties and enforceable contracts in place, just like any other commercial business.

When you have virtual monopolies over time, they tend to

erode the goodwill they had when they started.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Minister Gerry Ritz has indicated strong support for these changes and that will go a long way to building the political support needed to enable them. It's good for us to have a champion and we'll probably look for others in sectors such as mining and lumber.

When shippers can't be sure they can deliver on time, then they widen the basis for late deliveries and that comes right out of the farmers' pocket.

Richard Phillips is the executive director of the Grain Growers of Canada.

“When you have virtual monopolies over time, they tend to erode the goodwill they had when they started”



Thanks to considerable effort by a coalition of railway users, relief appears to be on the horizon for shippers seeking better service and more equity in penalties, says Richard Phillips of the Grain

Growers of Canada. In March, the Government of Canada accepted the recommendations (see sidebar) of the Rail Freight Service Review panel.

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Railways continue to develop commercial measures to improve rail service related to service changes, service agreements, dispute resolution and enhanced reporting.
- 2 Railways provide a minimum of 10 working days notice to changes in local train service.
- 3 Railways enter into good faith negotiations to establish service agreements upon request by stakeholders who have an operational or commercial relationship with them.
- 4 Railways negotiate with shortlines and customers on shortlines to determine a fair and balanced commercial dispute resolution process.
- 5 Railways provide improved supply chain visibility through enhanced bilateral reporting.
- 6 A Transport Canada-appointed facilitator consult with railways and railway users to develop acceptable and meaningful public reporting.
- 7 Legislation be implemented on facilitators' reports on commercial dispute resolution and enhanced performance reporting.
- 8 The 2015 statutory review of the *Canada Transportation Act* shall include an assessment of the effects and effectiveness of the rail service framework.

News & events

Alberta Barley Commission 2011 annual regional meetings

The Alberta Barley Commission's annual regional meetings are one of your best opportunities to learn about and share information specific to growing barley where you farm. Each meeting features presentations and discussions from leading producers, researchers, agronomists and industry experts.

As well, we're continuing the tradition of combining our annual regional meetings with other crop commissions so you can take in two producer-group meetings at once.

For updates, visit albertabarley.com later this fall or see the November issue of *Barley Country*.

Region 1*

Nov. 24, 2011 in Brooks: Heritage Inn. Three delegate positions and one director position are open for election, with the incumbent director eligible for re-election. Joint meeting with the Alberta Canola Producers Commission.

Region 2*

Dec. 1, 2011 in Rosebud: Rosebud Community Hall. Two delegate positions and one director position are open for election, with the incumbent director eligible for re-election. Joint meeting with the Alberta Canola Producers Commission.

Region 3

Nov. 23, 2011 in Lacombe: Lacombe Memorial Hall. Five delegate positions are open for election. Joint meeting with the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and the Alberta Canola Producers Commission.

Region 4*

Nov. 24, 2011 in Vegreville: Alberta Innovates Technology Futures Meeting Room. Two delegates positions are open for election.

Region 5

Dec. 2, 2011 in Westlock: Westlock Community Hall. Three delegates positions are open for election. Joint meeting with Alberta Canola Producers Commission.

Region 6*

Nov. 29, 2011 in Falher: ACFA Hall. One delegate position is open for election. Joint meeting with Alberta Pulse Growers Commission.

Director-at-large

One director-at-large position is available, with the incumbent eligible for re-election. Candidates for this position must be eligible producers in Regions 1, 2, 4 or 6. Balloting will take place at the respective annual regional meetings, with the votes tabulated and announced at the December 2011 annual general meeting.

Nominating Commission directors

*All nomination forms for regional director and the director-at-large positions are available through the Alberta Barley Commission's office and the website (albertabarley.com). All nomination forms must be received at the Commission office no later than 4:30 pm on Oct. 31, 2011.

Alberta Barley Commission 2011 annual general meeting and feed summit Dec. 7-9, 2011

Don't miss Alberta's barley event of the year, a gathering of producers, industry experts and researchers from far and wide at the Banff Park Lodge. Dec. 7 will feature sessions for delegates and directors. On Dec. 8, all members are welcome to learn about the latest research projects, gain insight into market trends and opportunities, and develop a better understanding of barley end-users. As well, Dec. 9 will feature a feed summit, bringing together members of the barley, pork and beef industries.

For hotel bookings at the Banff Park Lodge, call (403) 762-4433 or toll free (800) 661-9266. For online bookings, visit banffparklodge.com and select "Reservations" and "Make a Conference Reservation." The group ID is 16066 and the password is 823.

Advance reservations for the annual general meeting must be made by Nov. 7.

For more information, contact Linda Whitworth in the Commission office at (403) 291-9111 ext. 33.

2011 Best of CAMA Gala Nov. 3, 2011

The Canadian Agri-Marketing Association is a network of agricultural marketing and business professionals. With chapters across the country, CAMA allows members to keep up to date on the latest agri-marketing trends. Held in Banff at the Rimrock Resort Hotel, the gala celebrates excellence in agri-marketing in Canada. Registration \$145; for more information, visit bestofcama.com.

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Nov. 4-13, 2011

Since its inception in November 1922, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair has become the world's largest indoor agricultural and international equestrian competition. The Royal draws more than 300,000 visitors to Toronto annually to see thousands of unique entries from elite Canadian and international breeders, growers and exhibitors, more than 4,500 large and small animals, shows, activities and, of course, the Royal Horse Show and the Royal Agricultural Show. For more information, visit royalfair.org/home.

Farmfair International Nov. 5-13, 2011

Established in 1974, Farmfair International holds the reigns as a top business destination for the global livestock industry. Each year, more than 100,000 people see, show and sell top-quality livestock in Edmonton. Visitors will be entertained, educated and engaged by beefed-up cattle shows and events, world-class equine sales and competitions and clinics, as well as a variety of small and specialty livestock programs. Farmfair also includes draft horse pulls, stock dog trials and team penning competitions at the Canadian Finals Rodeo, Canada's professional rodeo championships. For more information, go to farmfairinternational.com.

Agri-Trade

Nov. 9-12, 2011

Agri-Trade has been bringing the ag community together in Red Deer for more than 25 years, making November a standout month on farm calendars. Agri-Trade 2011 is one of Western Canada's finest agricultural equipment expositions. Highlights include the Ag Innovations Awards and the Fortis Alberta/Agri-Trend Agrology Learning Stage. For more information, go to agri-trade.com.

Canadian Western Agribition

Nov. 21-26, 2011

Regina's Canadian Western Agribition is a full week of agricultural events including the Commercial Trade Show, live stock presentations, youth events and the Canadian Cowboys' Association's Finals Rodeo. For more information, go to agribition.com.

Agri-Trend Farm Forum Event

Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2011

Agri-Trend's Farm Forum Event brings together Canada's largest agricultural consulting network, together with farmers and industry leaders in Saskatoon. The theme of this year's Agri-Trend is Farming 3.0: Linking Man and Machine for Maximum Potential. The forum includes numerous technical breakout sessions and keynote speakers on how technology and software-from maps, GPS and satellite imagery to improved mobile technologies and social media-can contribute to higher quality, yields and profits for agricultural products. For more information, visit thefarmforumevent.com.

Lloydminster's joint ag office

The governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan opened a new joint satellite agriculture office in Lloydminster in July.

An Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development marketing specialist is available to provide marketing information for grains, oilseeds and livestock markets. For appointments, call the Vermilion office at (780) 853-8240.

Specialists with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture are available to consult with producers on crops, livestock, forages and farm business management. For appointments, call (306) 446-7962.

The Lloydminster satellite agriculture office is at 107, 5303 - 50 Avenue. The Alberta specialist is available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays. The Saskatchewan specialists are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursdays.

NIRS grant available

Up to \$20,000 of funding is available for the purchase of Alberta near infrared reflectance spectroscopy (NIRS) equipment. The grant supports the adoption of NIRS by Alberta's livestock and crop sectors. Eligible applicants include individuals and companies with farms, feedlots, and feed processors in Alberta. Research and analytical organizations actively working with feed ingredients (grains, vegetable proteins, co-products and forages/roughages) are also eligible. The funds are provided by the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency and administered by the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund. For more information and application forms, visit acidf.ca/feeding or contact Rob Hand at (403) 872-8262 or rob@acidf.ca.

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